

Majestic Name

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[0:00] Well, turn in your Bibles to Psalm 8. We're in Psalm 8. Psalm 8 is the change of scenery from where we have been for the last couple of weeks.

! It might be a breath of fresh air for some of us. It's a meditation on the majesty of God. It's a psalm of praise.

Lord willing, we'll see next week that Psalm 9 is also a worship psalm. And so for the next two weeks, we're going to be on the mountaintop. But sadly, this mountaintop, like most mountaintop experiences, it's not going to last very long.

Psalm 10 is about praying in trouble. And Psalm 11 is about praying in trouble. And Psalm 12 is about praying in trouble.

I think you're getting the idea that that is a lesson that we need to learn. But for the next two weeks, we're going to be talking about praise.

[1:14] But you'll notice, if you look at verse 2, that even this praise that we're talking about today is done in the face of enemies. So we're not out of the muck of life altogether.

For the most part, it seems like in the next two psalms, the muck of life is sort of in the background. But it's there. Psalm 2 is still going on.

Remember what Psalm 2 is about. Someone tell me, what is going on in Psalm 2? The world raging against God.

This is the background. This is the context that we live our lives in. There is a constant battle.

There's this conflict. The enemies of God are trying to get rid of Him.

They're attacking Him and His people. But does this mean that God's people can't worship? No, not at all. Today, we're going to see that we worship in the face of our enemies.

[2:17] In their very faces, we do that. And Psalm 8 is one such occasion. It's a meditation on the majesty of God's name, His character. And so, let's look at it then.

And as we begin, let me ask you a question before we get into the text itself. Suppose you were at a grocery store. And you're at Woody's or you're at Walmart or wherever.

And you go down the cookie aisle. And as you're walking down the aisle, you notice on the top row, the bottom, never in the middle, but on the top or the bottom, there's this bag of ginger snap cookies.

And it's a plain brown bag, maybe with a picture of a wagon and some horses on it. And what message is that package of cookies, that packaging, trying to convey to you?

Think about that. Why do they put that in a big brown paper bag? It's old-fashioned. Yeah, it's trying to bring up this idea of, you know, these cookies are old-fashioned.

[3:22] They're like the ones that your grandma used to make. And the plain paper bag. It's trying to stir up within you this desire to purchase the cookies.

It's trying to bring up all these memories of something that, for most of us, has never been. But there's memories of, you know, grandma making ginger snap cookies.

And so it's packaging. Packaging conveys a message. And that's what we have at the beginning and the end of Psalm 8. The first and last verses are the packaging of the psalm.

David is trying to stir up within us a desire to worship God. So let's read it. Verse 1 and then verse 9. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Go to verse 9. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. That is what Psalm 8 is about.

[4:24] That's what David is trying to get us to. He wants to stir up within us this desire to worship the Lord. And so in the body, between those two verses, it's sort of like an Oreo cookie.

We're going to talk about it. You have the creamy sinner. And in the creamy sinners, there's three good reasons why we should delight ourselves in the majesty of God.

And so you see the first reason in verse 1 and 2. Let's read it. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens.

From the lips of children and infants, you have ordained praise, or you have established strength, because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

So David, why should we delight in the majesty of God? God, and his first reason is because of the irony of your strength.

[5:30] The irony of your strength. Now, everyone knows what irony is, even if you couldn't define it. It's ironic when a plumber has leaky pipes in his own house.

It doesn't go. It's ironic when the chef at the five-star restaurant goes home, and he eats hungry man meals. That's odd.

It's ironic when the PE teacher at school is overweight. And mine all were. It's unexpected. You know, it doesn't go together.

It's odd. It's the misplacement. And David says, it's amazing. This is totally mind-blowing. Where you put your strength, Lord.

When I see this, I see that you are majestic. Where you put your strength. It says in verse 2, From the lips of children and infants, you have ordained praise. The ESV, if you have an NIV, you can look at the footnote.

[6:36] And literally from the Hebrew, it says strength. You have established or ordained strength in the mouths of children and infants. And that's ironic.

That's not what you would expect. Look at verse 1. Tell me, where has God put His glory? Okay. Where has He set His glory? Where do you see? Above the heavens. He set His glory above the heavens. That's where He puts His glory.

But where does He put His strength? In children. In the weak things. In infants. So He puts His strength in the mouths of babes.

And He puts it in the lips of the weakest. And God does it. And it's unexpected. So His glory is above the heavens. And yet He makes the weak strong.

[7:38] He makes babies strong in the face of their enemies. And you see that at the end of verse 2, like we've already pointed out. These are God's enemies. David's enemies.

They're fighting. They're doing Psalm 2. They're seeking vengeance. These are the hairy-chested, tattooed brutes that are opposing God's people.

And God silences these big mammoth biker men with the words of a baby. That's the picture that David is portraying.

So what kind of strength is David talking about? Well, it's the strength of praise. That's the way the Greek translation took it.

That's the way Jesus quoted it in Matthew 2. And so David is talking about the lethal punch of praise. This great strength that comes with praise.

[8:42] And so the point is, David is saying that, God, when you put praise in the mouths of babes, you silence, you display your strength, you silence the strong.

So Thomas, I'll show you what I mean. Thomas Jefferson, or Thomas Jonathan Jackson, T.J. Jackson. He later earned the nickname Stonewall Jackson.

He was married to his first wife, Ellie. And Ellie goes into labor, and she delivers a stillborn son. So nine months. And the baby comes out stillborn. And then she suffers an uncontrollable hemorrhaging.

And so in a brief time on a Sunday afternoon, Jackson loses his son and loses his wife. So his child is gone.

[9:47] His wife is gone. The next day, Monday, he writes his sister. And he told her that he could submit to anything if the Lord would strengthen him.

But he didn't hide his despair. He was open with her. But in the middle of that note, of that letter, he says this, Oh, my sister, would that you could have him for your God.

Would that you could have him for your God. So can you imagine that? Can you imagine anyone weaker than Jackson at that time?

He was beaten. He was crushed. He was in the middle of pain. But he could say, Oh, that you could have him to be your God. So what defense could anyone give against that praise?

What could anyone say against God when the weakest person praises him? And so, brothers and sisters, that's the strength of praise.

[11:02] And God is majestic because he puts that devastating power in the mouths of infants and children. And he puts it into your hands so that when you are suffering, you could say with Paul, I delight in these things because they give me an opportunity to worship.

And so, God puts the lethal punch of praise in the mouth of the weakest. And so, are you weak? Are you hurting? Do you have enemies all around you?

Well, here's a weapon that God puts into your hands to silence the enemies of God. It silences them. And God is majestic in his strength because he puts it in the mouths of babes.

So his glory is in heaven and he puts his power into our very mouths. And so, David says, Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Well, David gives another reason. It's in verses 3 and 4. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

[12:18] So here's another bit of irony. Here's a bit of something else unexpected. David, why is God so majestic? God is majestic because he cares for men.

And that is only majestic when you think of what else he takes care of. What else he does. God creates the heavens and he cares for men.

And so, on a clear night, David could look up in the sky and see about 3,000 stars. That's as many stars as he could ever have seen. If David had a good pair of binoculars, he could have seen 100,000 stars.

But David only knew a drop of the universe. And he could still say, Oh, what is man that you would even care for him?

That's amazing. And so we need to stretch out and we need to think for a minute about how David felt. We need to get that feeling that he felt.

[13:27] And so let's consider the heavens for a minute. The universe approximately contains a trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion tons of matter.

I don't even know how much that is. I just copied it out of a book. It's a trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion tons of matter. 10% of that matter can be seen in stars and in the dust and in the planets.

10% is all that we can see. The other 90% is what's called dark matter. It's hiding. We don't know where. Only God sees it.

And so it's hiding in places where only God's eyes look at it. And think about the stars for a minute. The total number is unknown.

But best estimates you know, right now is in the universe there's somewhere between 10 to the 20th and 10 to the 24th. So 10 with 20 zeros behind it and 10 with 24 zeros behind it.

[14:35] Number of stars. Now some stars are smaller than our moon. And the biggest stars that we know of are the size of Jupiter's orbit as it orbits the sun over a billion miles wide.

That's how big the biggest stars are. Our closest neighbor is Alpha Centauri 4.3 light years away.

So if you want to think about it if you were to shrink the sun down to the size of a marble and so you're shrinking this whole picture and the sun is the size of a marble and we put that marble in the middle of downtown Bremen Alpha Centauri would if it was another marble it would be in Cincinnati. So you have that picture? If everything was shrunk down to that proportion Alpha Centauri our closest neighbor would be in downtown Cincinnati.

If you were to shrink the entire Milky Way just to the size of North America so you shrink the Milky Way down to the size of North America our solar system would fit in the coffee cup that you drank your coffee out of this morning.

And I was sitting there drinking my coffee this morning and thinking wow do you get it? I mean the whole solar system compared to the Milky Way and there are about a hundred billion Milky Ways in the universe.

[16:15] And then we remember Isaiah's words lift your eyes and look to the heavens who created all these things he who brings out the starry host one by one and calls them each by name because of his great power and mighty strength not one of them is missing.

So God knows them all he names them all he controls them all and so David thinks of this and says what is man that you would even care for him?

That's perplexed praise. It's amazing it's strange God makes made and names the stars he's on a first name basis with them and he cares for mankind and that's ridiculous why should God even bother with us?

You know so God he warms his hands over supernovas he gives birth to stars and he cares for you it's amazing and that kind of condensation it amazes us even when it's on a smaller scale one time Mozart was walking through the streets of Vienna and he was accosted a beggar came upon him and started asking him for money and Mozart didn't have any money on him and so he brought the beggar to this cafe and sat down right there and he jotted down an entire minuet trio which I looked up and what that is the whole third movement of a symphony he jotted it down and he gave it to the man and he sent him to Mozart's publishers and pretty soon that beggar was walking out of the publishers with his money in his pocket

Mozart had given him a third movement of a symphony so why did Mozart even bother why didn't he just tell him to buzz off well that's David's question what is man that you should care for him and do you feel what David is doing he's moving us to worship he's stirring up that desire to worship but David's not done yet he gives a third reason and David's and I guess we can call it the clarity of your revelation so we've seen the irony of your strength we've seen the heavens the stars and what is man that you should care for him and the third point is the clarity of your revelation let's read verses 5 through 8 and as we read I want you to listen to see if you can hear what

[19:15] Old Testament passage David is echoing he has a passage and he's riffing on it so to speak he's echoing it he's replaying it so verses 5 through 8 you made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor you made him ruler over the works of your hands you put everything under his feet all flocks and herds and the beasts of the field the birds of the air and the fish of the sea all that swim the paths of the seas O Lord our Lord how majestic is your name echoing replaying do you know Genesis 1 Genesis 1 how does David know that God cares for men because the

Bible tells me so David knows that God cares for men despite men's apparent insignificance when you compare him to the stars and comparison to the heavens because the Bible tells him so the Bible gives gives us this wonderful answer to the question what is man it's an and it's a clear answer and it's a clear answer from God himself our maker and David says when I think about what your word tells me I have to praise you a lot of times we don't appreciate what we have until it's gone have you noticed that you don't appreciate someone until they're gone you don't appreciate what you have until it's gone you don't appreciate home until you leave so!

let me ask you when did the prodigal son start to really appreciate dad when he lost everything when he's in the pig pen then he's like wow you know my dad's servants are treated better than this and I'm his son and you know dad he turns out he's a pretty alright guy and so that he gets up and goes when he was far away that's when he started to appreciate home and too often we take for granted the Bible's answer for who we are when we don't think about it we take for granted its clarity about who I am and what am I doing here but you know not everyone answers the question what is man in a way that drives them to praise that gives them joy and hope and strength they don't answer it that way so let's leave home for a minute let's go with a prodigal son and say what do other people say to the question what is man think about the answer from paganism and paganism is not just something that happened a long time ago in the

Greeks and the Romans it's happening in our culture right now and it's becoming more and more popular the man on the street pagan says when I look up at the stars I fall down and I worship them because you know they're the powers that control the universe they're mean and they're spiteful and they're unpredictable but what can you do they're in control then there's the answer of nihilism the sort of pessimistic existentialism that gripped Europe and the United States in the 50s and in the 60s and it still left its scars today and so many people believe it today what is man compared to the universe and they say man is trash you're trash you're nothing you're just the worm on the garbage maybe you probably haven't heard of

Samuel Beckett maybe you have he was a philosopher literary kind of guy in the last century his most famous work is a play called Waiting for Godot and it's about these guys and they're standing there on stage and they're having this conversation and they're waiting for this person Godot to show up and Godot is the thin disguise mask for God they're waiting for God to show up and they're talking and they're talking and Godot never shows up and the play ends so Beckett lived in a world without God without purpose we could talk about him but he's not showing up Beckett wrote

another play called breath it's a 35 second play not very traditional 35 seconds with no actors no dialogue the curtains swing back and on the stage is a pile of garbage and the stage is lit by a very dim light and throughout the 35 seconds the light gets slightly brighter and then it dims down again there's only three sounds in the play there's a cry at the beginning this gasping ragged breath and then another cry at the end and the lights go out and then that's it the end that's man from [25:11] Beckett's perspective man is trash trash that breathes momentarily trash nonetheless and I would seriously encourage you to go home and youtube it there's several renditions of it you can see it for yourself sit and watch it and think about it you might think it's silly but this is a serious belief in our world and when you let that message sink in and when you see that trash on the stage and say this is what they think about you this is what they and praise him for what he has told you about yourself you aren't trash you're royalty you're the ruler is what it says then there's humanism the humanist manifesto 1973 says this we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species faith in the prayer hearing

God assumed to love and care for persons! to hear and understand their prayers and to be able to do something about them is an unproved and outmoded faith so people call you trash and humanism says you're alone you're alone you pray and no one hears and it's old fashioned to think that someone hears you there's no purpose for your life there's no purpose for your sufferings for your joys nothing you're alone but what does God say what does God say what is the divine answer to the question what is man well in verses five and eight David tells us he reads Genesis one and David knows that man is royal God said let us make man in our own image after our likeness let them rule that's who we are we're image bearers of

God even in our fallen state we're still carrying the status as image bearers we exist to image God's royalty his authority his glory in this world and so think about what a difference that view makes that's why Jesus could say consider the ravens consider the birds of the air they neither sow nor reap they have neither storehouse nor barn and yet God feeds them of how much more value are you than the birds so will they have food yes God will give them roadkill on the road you know and they'll be happy he'll feed them but surely he'll feed you if he feeds them argue from the lesser to the greater he's going to feed you he's going to take care of you we're sons and daughters and so we've seen three reasons why David adores

God now I want to close with a problem and a solution if you're thinking there's you're going to notice there's a problem with psalm 8 and you should see a slight disagreement it's look look at verse six it says you put everything under his feet you put everything under his feet and if you are thinking and you're thinking biblically you should say really are you sure about that everything under our feet because right now I don't see everything under our feet I don't I see cancer and I see car accidents and I see tyrants and I see evil governments and I see a lot of evil that we have no control over so how can

David say everything how could he say that how could that possibly be true how could that ever be true and the answer to that problem is that under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit David prophesied of Jesus Psalm 8 is ultimately not about you and it's not about me it's ultimately about Jesus and that's what Hebrews the book of Hebrews says so let's go there in conclusion let's turn to Hebrews chapter 2 verse 6 Hebrews chapter 2 verse 6 and listen as I read some of these verses here but there is a place where someone has testified what is man that you are mindful of him the son of man that you care for him you made him a little lower than the angels you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet and putting everything under him

[30:52] God left nothing that is not subject to him yet at the present we do not see everything subject to him but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone and bringing many sons to glory it was fitting that God for whom and through whom everything exists should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family so Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers we can go on the author to the Hebrews saw the problem of Psalm 8 everything is not under man's feet we don't see that but he says but we see

Jesus we see Jesus because of his suffering and his death he has been crowned with glory and honor and he reigns already and he reigns to bring many sons to glory he reigns to bring his brothers and his sisters the same his family up to that position he reigns to save his children and you could see that in the rest of Hebrews 2 because Jesus reigns we will reign that is what Hebrews

2 is saying and Psalm 8 will come true ultimately and finally and completely and that gives us hope and it gives us solid undeniable hope because if Jesus is there then surely we will be there and if Psalm 8 has come true for Jesus then we who belong to him it will come true for us now in the middle ages!

there was a lot of speculation in Europe as to whether you could sail around Africa and make it to India they were wondering if there was a sea route to India and no one could be sure some thought you could others disagreed so the explorers went out and one by one they tried to make it around Africa!

The worst part of the trip was around the tip of Africa and every attempt failed ships were sunk they were forced to turn back in the stormy waters of the cape there and they called it the cape of storms!

the cape of stormy got a new name it's called the cape of good hope and that's the point of Hebrews 2 it's saying psalm 8 isn't a fantasy thought up by some religious crackpot and how do we know because of Jesus Jesus has gone there Jesus has done it he's already reigning and so no one can deny the fact that we will be there that you will be there and so the son is on the throne and he is the great redeemer of mankind and he is the guarantee that this royal future awaits for all those who put their trust in him he reigns to bring many sons to glory and so in light of what Jesus has done what should we do well we end up with verse 9 we should say with David oh lord our lord how majestic is your name in all the earth well we have two minutes is there any questions or comments before we're dismissed yes may may may may may may
[35 : 49] That's true of human babies, isn't it?

Huh. Anyone else? Questions or comments? OK, we're dismissed.